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## The Factors That Influence The Transfer Of Training In Disaster Preparedness Training: A Review

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### Abstract

Every organisation and government invests in implementing effective training programmes to maximize the inherent value of their existing human capital. Human development training programmes have been an integral part in encouraging the employees to be a competent and skilled labour force that is knowledgeable and able to perform assigned tasks. Disaster preparedness training is one of training programmes provided to employees and volunteers to prepare and reduce the effects of a disaster such as flood. A variety of training is provided such as swimming skills, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) technique, basic rescue, disaster management, physical intelligence and basic disaster action. However, there is still lack of study that reviews the potential factors that influence the transfer of training in disaster preparedness training. This study is conducted to address this gap. Specifically, this study will review previous studies to identify the potential factors that could influence the transfer of training in disaster preparedness training.

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**Keywords:** Disaster preparedness, transfer of training

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### 1. Introduction

Training is an essential element for an organization to move forward According to the Prime Minister in the 2015 Budget, human capital is an important source in determining a nation's success. Fresh ideas, creativity, the latest innovations and soft skills generate the economy of a nation. In its annual report, the Human Resource Development

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Corporation (Pembangunan Sumber Manusia Berhad (PSMB), a total of 783,296 training sites with financial assistance amounting to RM506.14 million has been approved, with the payment of RM407.65 million made throughout the year ending 2013 (Pembangunan Sumber Manusia Berhad, 2013). This shows that various trainings have been carried out, at high expense, to help workers increase their level of knowledge, skills and competence (Saks, Salas, & Lewis, 2014). A majority of the workers who have attended the trainings showed lack of transfer of skills and knowledge (Kasim, Omar, Ali, & Hashim, 2013).

The study noted that only 10 percent of the trainings have successfully established a positive transfer of learning (Schneider, Pältz, & Stauche, 2014). The study by TransLearn Associates (1999), however, stated that only 5 percent of the knowledge and skills learned are applicable at the workplace. The New Economic Model for Malaysia (Majlis Penasihat Ekonomi Negara, 2010) proposed for a better range of skills training programmes to address the issues on the lack of talent, skilled labour and the weak job market.

The main objective of training is to enable workers to master knowledge, skills and attitude acquired during their training and to apply what they have learned into their daily work activities. In this modern day and age, it is crucial for an organization to have competent, knowledgeable workforce to retain their competitive edge. This would enable employers to contribute towards the economic growth of the nation, in response to the main policies stated by the Government, namely in terms of human capital development (Economic Planning Unit, 2013).

## **2. Disaster Preparedness Training**

Disaster preparation training is one of the exercises to provide workers with the right knowledge, skills and attitude when facing a disaster. It is a training programme provided to employees and volunteers to prepare them and reduce the effects of disaster such as flood and also to increase their knowledge and readiness (Alam, n.d.). A variety of training is provided such as swimming skills, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) technique, basic rescue, disaster management, physical intelligence and basic disaster action. According to the World Health Organization, prevention and preparation is equally important with emergency supplies. The community should be equipped to face any disaster with enough knowledge and skills (Alim, Kawabata, & Nakazawa, 2014) and disaster preparedness training should be held frequently (Rahman, 2012; Gissing, 2003).

In the study of Jasper et al., (2013), disaster preparedness training and knowledge preparation for medical workers has been found to be insufficient as employees were still not ready to deal with the disaster (Rn & Rgn, 2011). One of the ways for medical organizations to ensure the transfer of knowledge during the training is to ensure that assessments on disaster preparation are conducted continuously in order to maintain or retain information, knowledge and skills acquired during training. Therefore, trainers need to know their roles and responsibilities by emphasizing on knowledge (Tahir, 2005) and understanding it by attending disaster preparedness training.

## **3. Transfer of Training**

Training is an intensive learning process that is developed in order to improve the knowledge, skills and attitudes of employees to increase their performance levels. The learning process is very important. It needs to be done on an ongoing basis in order to ensure the transfer of information and skills acquired in training. It is one of the organization's efforts in planning training for staff with the intention to ease learning and improve worker's competency in doing work.

The transfer of training is the process of transferring new knowledge, skills and attitude for effective work performance. What has been learned in training to prepare for disasters must to be applied in the workplace or at the location of the occurrence of the disaster (Lim & Nowell, 2014).

Most of the training and development programmes that have been carried out by the organization is wasted because the training is not effective and employees failed to apply new knowledge, skills and attitude at the workplace. Meanwhile, only 21 percent of interested organizations assess the level of transfer of training of their employees (Lim & Nowell, 2014). Frequently associated when the employees can use what they have learned at the workplace (Bouzguenda, 2014). There is no solution to this problem and it has become a worldwide phenomenon.

Employees who are not practicing what they have learned during training, the training is considered ineffective. If the employee does not practice for six months, the new knowledge, skills and attitude will forgotten by

individuals who have undergone training. It is considered a waste as it has not helped to improve organizational performance. When an employee is able to change after returning to work after attending training, the training is considered successful. There are factors that affect the transfer of training that has been spoken of by past research. These are the work environment, training design, individual characteristic and organisation environment. All these factors are accepted by researchers as they greatly influenced the transfer of training.

#### 4. Factors influence Transfer of Training

35 years prior to the research done by Baldwin & Ford (1988) it was discussed that the transfer of training exists in organizations. The result of this research is categorised into 3 factors: the work environment, trainees' characteristics and training design.

##### i. Work Environment

The most powerful influence in the work environment is to create a conducive climate at the workplace and to ensure both supervisor support and peer support (Blume, Ford, Baldwin, & Huang, 2009)(Homklin, Takahashi, & Techakanont, 2014). Social support is one of the strong relationships in the transfer of training. The three types of social support are: supervisor support, co-worker support and organizational support (Cheng & Hampson, 2008). Results of past research found co-worker support is most positive in the transfer of training (Homklin et al., 2014). In addition to this, the organization should continue to actively provide full, continuous encouragement and motivation to the employee so that the process of the transfer of training works more effectively (Zumrah, 2014) (Lim & Nowell, 2014). Without encouragement from the supervisor, employees become less enthusiastic in performing their duties and lack to transfer training into the workplace.

Moral support is very important in pushing workers to improve work performance. A good relationship with colleagues also helps in applying the transfer of knowledge to work. Colleagues have to mutual assistance and help if there is difficulty in work with what has been learned in training. The motivation given by organizations can raise the interest of employees and use all skills, knowledge in the workplace and continue to produce employee dedication to the organization. With this factor, waste of training will not exist in fact raise profit organization has employees who are versatile.

The obstacles (real or imagined) preventing trainees from applying skills and knowledge in the workplace is interference from immediate (work) environments (Kozlowski & Salas, 1997). Raquel Velada, (2007) argued that many training transfer studies excluded environment factors such as continuous learning culture (e.g. Tracey et al., 1995). Research has demonstrated that training efforts are unlikely to result in positive changes in job performance unless the newly trained competencies are transferred to the work environment (Raquel Velada, 2007) In the current literature, work environment has been classified into two dimensions that have received attention with regard to transfer of training including organizational culture and climate (e.g. Baldwin & Ford, 1988;) stressed the importance of both transfer of training climate and continuous learning organization culture as work environment variables that have a significant impact on the post-training (Raquel Velada, 2007).

##### ii. Trainee Characteristics

To improve return on investment from training, it is important for any organization to know how trainees transfer the learned knowledge after a training program to the job environment (Salas and Cannon-Bowers, 2001). The trainee's reaction after attending disaster preparedness training is one of the reasons of the effectiveness of the transfer of training. Trainees who are more positive and responded well to trainings tend to be more willing to apply what they have learned (Lim & Nowell, 2014). Based on the previous study, the trainee characteristics which influence in training process are self-efficacy, motivation to learn and to transfer and cognitive ability. Job involvement, organizational commitment, organizational cynicism and job satisfaction are also trainee's characteristics stated by previous study.

Of these characteristics, trainees with higher self- efficacy are more likely to transfer the training to the job performance. Holton et al. (2000) defined performance self-efficacy as when an individual's general belief and desired, they are able to change their performance. Hence, they will be more likely to transfer such knowledge and/ or skills to the job when a trainee feels confident in his or her ability to perform. Trainees must have the ability to retain the knowledge instilled during the training program to facilitate the transfer process.

### iii. Training Design

Training is a critical part of training effectiveness and also give effect to Learning an assessment of knowledge acquired, skills improved, or attitudes changed (Robin A. Cheramie, 2010). Organizational training programs are often an effective way to improve employee performance on the job. The critical elements related to training success are include training design, the quality of instruction, and the content of training. But, beyond these elements, employee attitudes related to training are likely to affect the degree to which those employees learn.

The design of a training improvement programme is the main focus (Saks et al., 2014; Bouzguenda, 2014). Various training methods are provided to the trainees such as videos, case studies, tutorials, discussion groups, demonstrations, presentations, handouts and role-plays (Pesiridis, Sourtzi, Galanis, & Kalokairinou, 2014). Some recent studies have indicated that these have reduced the transfer of knowledge because the world is now more inclined towards technology. Learning in the classroom are different situations with real-life conditions (Saks et al., 2014). One of the more effective methods is simulation. Simulation is a learning situation like real ones (Jose & Dufrene, 2014). It is one of the alternatives in addition to the lecture and web based learning. Simulation can help trainees to be better equipped in the face of disaster and by knowing how to handle the situation in the event of a real disaster.

According to the results by Morrison & Catanzaro (2010), 79.5% of the method use of simulation in training has helped the trainees understand the actual situation faced during perils (Goodhue, Burke, Chambers, Ferrer, & Upperman, 2010). Disaster preparedness training has also improved knowledge, skills and behaviours in training stimulations (Jasper et al., 2013). Simulation is a hands-on experiential training method (Tahir, 2005) that promotes knowledge. Landry studies & Stockton (2008) found training designs considered popular by trainees: 40.8% chose hands-on experience (the real situation) as the main design in addition to training, 10.2% chose mock (role play), 6.1% (tabletop exercise), 4.1% video, case presentation and lecture and 2.0% CD-ROM.

## 5. Conclusion

Organizations required contributors who are able to move and further develop international level organizations. Therefore, organizations require skilled and trained workers and this is vital to their success. With the huge investment costs for training employees, training and development is indeed important for any organization. Organizations need to understand the factors affecting disaster preparedness training so that they can be realized and resolved successfully. Any relationship between the disaster preparedness training input and the transfer of training can lead to improved performance and maximization of benefits. These allow organizations to continue to be competitive in the face of global competition, the changing environment and unstable economic conditions. (Kasim et al., 2013)

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